

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An automated animal return system for an animal comprising:
~~an initiator for providing an initiating signal;~~
a locator system for detecting a position of the animal relative to a reward zone;
a command system for issuing a command to the animal ~~in response to said initiating signal,~~ when said locator system detects that said position of the animal is within a first boundary zone located beyond said reward zone, said command designed to encourage the animal to go to said a reward zone; and
a reward system for providing a food reward to the animal ~~in response to the initiating signal~~ when said locator system detects that the animal begins to return to said reward zone from said first boundary zone in response to said command.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Original) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said command is selected from a group of audible commands consisting of clicks, tones, whistles and verbal commands.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said locator system is selected from a group of locator systems consisting of GPS based locators, RF based locators, ultrasonic based locators, magnetic direction sensor based locators,

accelerometer based locators, manual gate systems, electronic gate systems and combinations thereof.

7. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said reward system also provides is an audible reward selected from the group of audible rewards consisting of a click, a tone, a whistle and a verbal phrase.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 7, wherein said audible reward is broadcast from a speaker located in or near said reward zone.
11. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 7, wherein said audible reward is broadcast from a speaker mounted on a collar attached to the animal.
12. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 7, wherein said audible reward is prerecorded.
13. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim ~~9~~1, including a reward limiter to limit the provision of said food reward to selected times when the animal returns from said first boundary zone to said reward zone in response to said command.
14. (Original) The animal return system of claim 13, wherein said selected times are determined based on a fraction of a total number of times the animal has returned from said first boundary zone to said reward zone in response to said command.
15. (Original) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said command is broadcast from a speaker located in or near said reward zone.

16. (Original) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said command is broadcast from a speaker mounted on a collar attached to the animal.
17. (Original) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said command is a prerecorded command.
18. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim ~~5~~1, including a discomfort system for applying a discomfort to the animal ~~on an occurrence of a predetermined event when said locator system detects that the animal has moved beyond said first boundary zone into a second boundary zone, or when said locator system detects that the animal has not moved toward said reward zone after a predetermined amount of time following the issuance of said command.~~
19. (Canceled)
20. (Original) The animal return system of claim 18, wherein said discomfort is selected from a group of discomforts consisting of an electric stimulus administered by electrodes attached to a collar secured to the animal, an audible tone broadcast from a speaker attached to said collar secured to the animal or from a central location, and an offensive spray issued from a spray system attached to said collar secured to the animal, or combinations of the above-listed discomforts.
21. (Original) The animal return system of claim 18, wherein the intensity of said discomfort is variable.
22. (Original) The animal return system of claim 18, wherein said discomfort is discontinued after a predetermined amount of time or following a predetermined number of applications.

23. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein said return system is operable in a training mode to enable a trainer to train the animal to respond to said command, said training mode including a manual command mode to enable said trainer to manually cause said ~~initiating signal~~ command to be issued.
24. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 23, wherein said training mode also includes a manual reward mode to enable said trainer to manually ~~cause~~ activate said reward ~~to be provided to the animal system~~.
25. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim 15, wherein the sizes of said first boundary zone and said reward zone are variable.
26. (Original) The animal return system of claim 1, wherein the return system is portable for operation at a remote location.
27. (Canceled)
28. (Canceled)
29. (Currently Amended) The animal return system of claim ~~27~~, ~~and~~ wherein said reward system provides ~~and said~~ audible reward to the animal when said locator system detects that the animal begins to return to a neutral zone located between said reward zone and said first boundary zone in response to said command, and wherein said reward system provides ~~a said~~ food reward to the animal when the locator system detects that the animal has returned to said reward zone in response to said command.
30. (Currently Amended) A method of causing an animal to return to a predetermined reward zone comprising the steps of:
automatically locating the position of the animal relative to the reward zone using a locating system;

issuing a command to the animal when said locating system detects that the animal is within a first boundary zone located beyond said reward zone to encourage the animal to return to the reward zone; and

providing a food reward to the animal when said locating system determines that the animal begins to return to the reward zone in response to said command.

31. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein said command is selected from a group of audible commands consisting of clicks, tones, whistles and verbal commands.
32. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein said locating system is selected from a group of locating systems consisting of GPS based locators, RF based locators, ultrasonic based locators, magnetic direction sensor based locators, accelerometer based locators, manual gate systems, electronic gate systems and combinations thereof.
33. (New) The method of claim 30, also including the step of providing an audible reward to the animal when said locating system determines that the animal begins to return to the reward zone in response to said command, said audible reward selected from the group of audible rewards consisting of a click, a tone, a whistle and a verbal phrase.
34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said audible reward is broadcast from a speaker located in or near said reward zone.
35. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said audible reward is broadcast from a speaker mounted on a collar attached to the animal.
36. (New) The method of claim 30, including the step of limiting the provision of said food reward to selected times when the animal returns from said first boundary zone to said reward zone in response to said command.

37. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein said selected times are determined based on a fraction of a total number of times the animal has returned from said first boundary zone to said reward zone in response to said command.
38. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein said command is broadcast from a speaker located in or near said reward zone.
39. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein said command is broadcast from a speaker mounted on a collar attached to the animal.
40. (New) The method of claim 30, including the step of applying a discomfort to the animal when said locator system detects that the animal has moved beyond said first boundary zone into a second boundary zone, or when said locator system detects that the animal has not moved toward said reward zone after a predetermined amount of time following the issuance of said command.
41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein said discomfort is selected from a group of discomforts consisting of an electric stimulus administered by electrodes attached to a collar secured to the animal, an audible tone broadcast from a speaker attached to said collar secured to the animal or from a central location, and an offensive spray issued from a spray system attached to said collar secured to the animal, or combinations of the above-listed discomforts.
42. (New) The method of claim 40, including the step of varying the intensity of said discomfort.
43. (New) The method of claim 40, including the step of discontinuing said discomfort after a predetermined amount of time or following a predetermined number of applications.